

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 11, 2014

The Honorable Eric Holder  
Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Kerry  
Secretary, U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health & Human  
Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Arne Duncan  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

The Honorable Rajiv Shah  
Director, U.S. Agency for International  
Development  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20523

Brian Deese  
Deputy Director, Office of Management & Budget  
Executive Office of the President  
725 17th Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Attorney General Holder, Secretary Kerry, Secretary Burwell, Secretary Duncan,  
Administrator Shah and Deputy Director Deese,

We thank you for your efforts to promote the rights of women and girls in the United States and globally and urge you to establish and fund a national and international strategy on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). With strong leadership, ending the practice of FGM within a generation is not only a compelling cause, but an achievable goal.

FGM is a harmful traditional practice carried out on an estimated 125 million girls and women around the world. Approximately 30 million women and girls remain at risk of FGM – including girls here in the United States. Specifically, by a now-dated 1997 estimate, nearly 70,000 women and girls in the United States are in danger of being subjected to FGM, and, disturbingly, all too many American girls have been transported abroad where they are forced to undergo FGM, often during their school summer breaks. We are in contact with young women across the US who have been subjected to FGM and are calling for our help to end the practice.

In recent years, the United States has played an increasingly diligent role in helping to address and prevent FGM globally. This includes the State Department's strong work on the adoption of a United Nations General Assembly resolution that called for countries to develop national strategies to end FGM – including an end to impunity for those who carry out the practice. Recognizing that FGM is an irreparable, irreversible abuse that violates the human rights of women and girls, the UNGA resolution is a groundbreaking move.

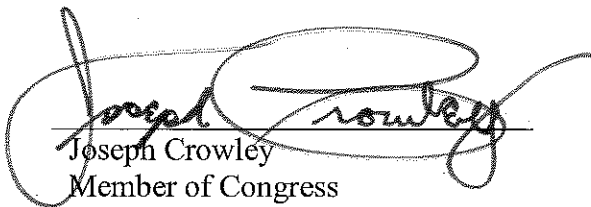
Further, Congress adopted the language of the Girls Protection Act, a measure providing legal protections for American girls who could be transported abroad for the purposes of FGM. This new legislation sets an example for other countries and sends a clear message to all that performing FGM on a minor carries serious legal consequences.

Now, we urge you to develop and carry out a comprehensive plan to implement the General Assembly resolution and the Girls Protection Act. This includes educating law enforcement, medical professionals, social workers, teachers and others in contact with girls at risk for FGM so that they are aware of legal protections and supported in their efforts to intervene on girls' behalf. It also includes considering an emergency hotline for girls and their allies seeking assistance in avoiding preventable FGM, as well as a clear and understandable plan of action for girls who may be at risk. And, we ask you to compile data on women and girls in the US that have been subjected to FGM as well as girls at risk of being subjected to FGM.

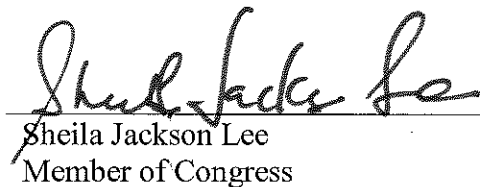
Just as a comprehensive strategy should make available resources for community members seeking to end the practice, we believe it should include a budget reflecting a plan to end FGM globally once and for all – not only saving the lives of women throughout the world, but helping eliminate the practice in places where American girls are being transported and forcibly subjected to the procedure. Lessons can be drawn from ongoing efforts to stop FGM, including in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, where the government, in collaboration with FGM survivors, is taking strong action.

We believe that your government agencies can contribute to and lead this joint, comprehensive effort. We look forward to working with you and stand ready to lend our assistance in any way possible.

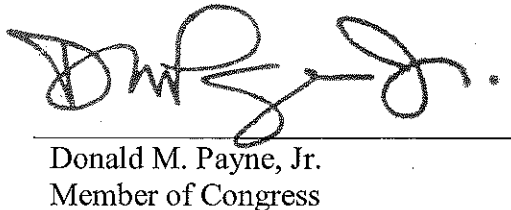
Sincerely,



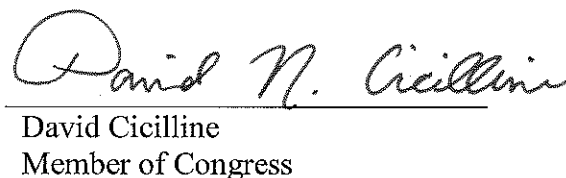
Joseph Crowley  
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress



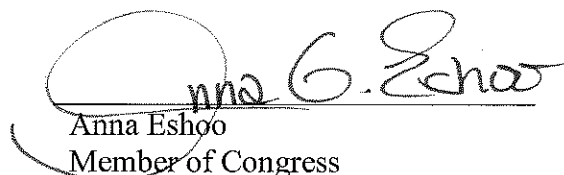
Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress



David Cicilline  
Member of Congress



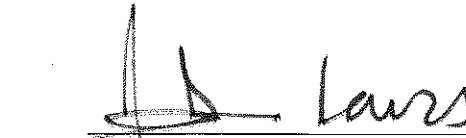
Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress



Anna Eshoo  
Member of Congress



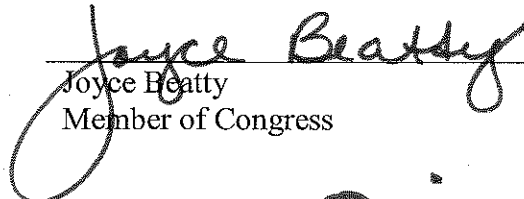
Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



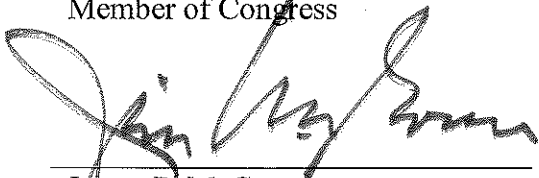
John Lewis  
Member of Congress



Karen Bass  
Member of Congress



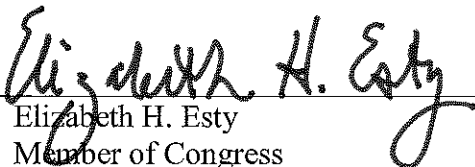
Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress




James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



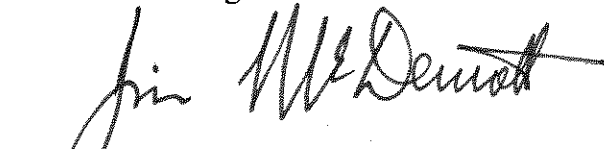
Elizabeth H. Esty  
Member of Congress



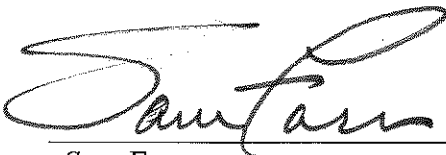
Alan S. Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



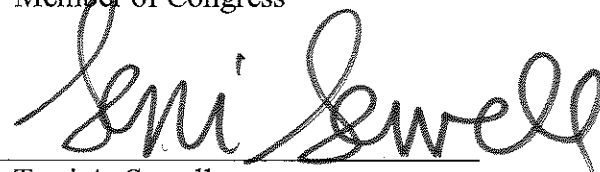
Theodore E. Deutch  
Member of Congress



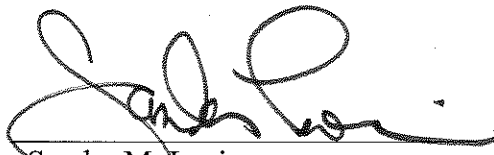
Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress



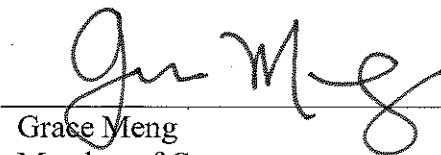
Sam Farr  
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress




Sander M. Levin  
Member of Congress



Grace Meng  
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Hakeem S. Jeffries  
Member of Congress



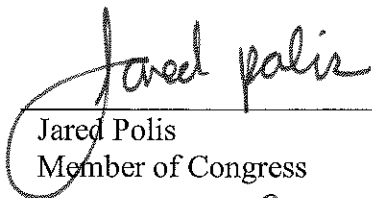
Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



Matt Cartwright  
Member of Congress



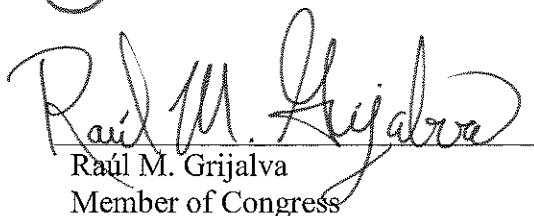
Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress



Jared Polis  
Member of Congress



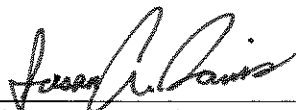
Ron Kind  
Member of Congress



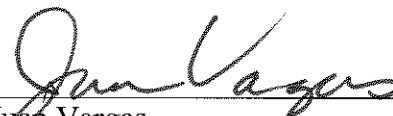
Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



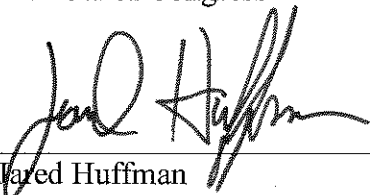
Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



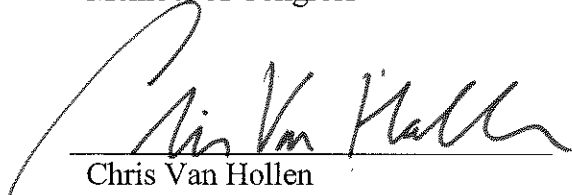
Susan A. Davis  
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



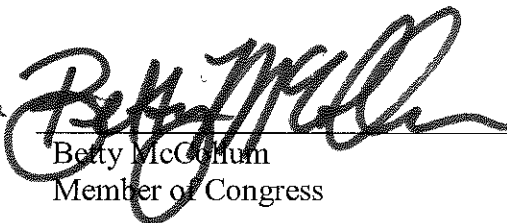
Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



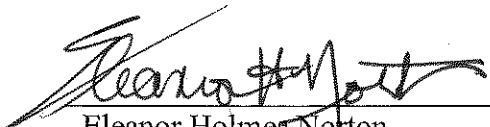
Chris Van Hollen  
Member of Congress



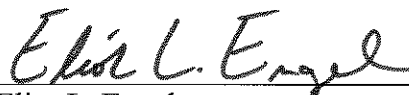
Michael M. Honda  
Member of Congress




Betty McCrumb  
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



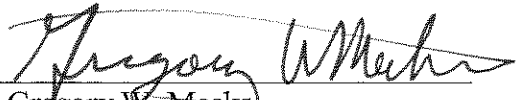
Eliot L. Engel  
Member of Congress



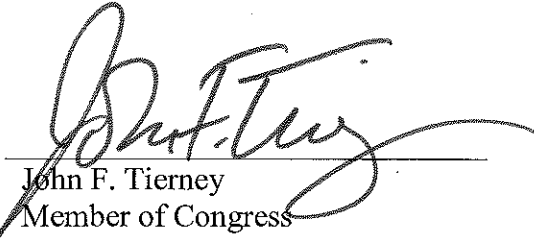
Henry A. Waxman  
Member of Congress



Lois Capps  
Member of Congress



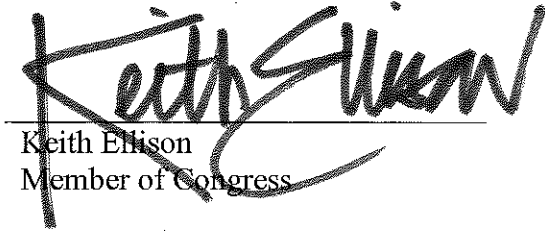
Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress



John F. Tierney  
Member of Congress



Henry "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



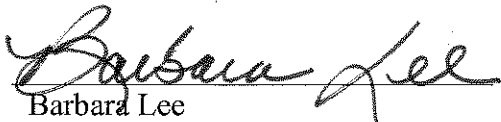
Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress



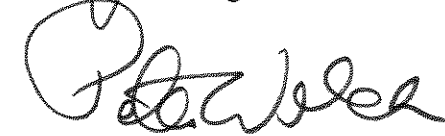
Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress



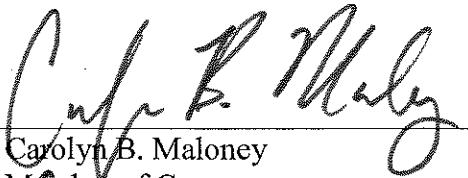
James P. Moran  
Member of Congress



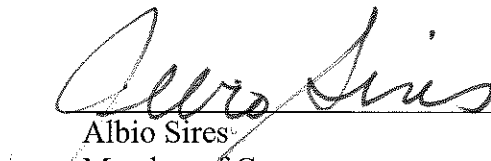
Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



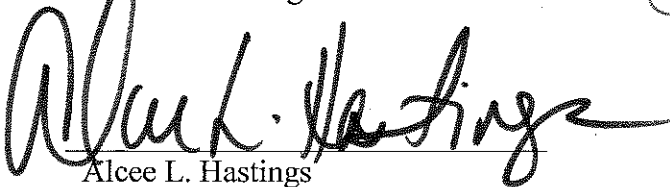
Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress



Albio Sires  
Member of Congress



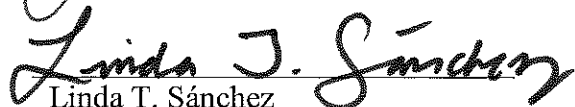
Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress



Janice D. Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



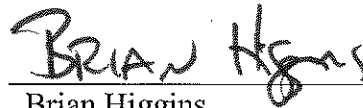
Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



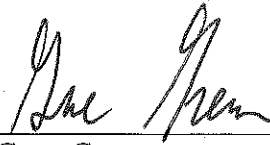
André Carson  
Member of Congress



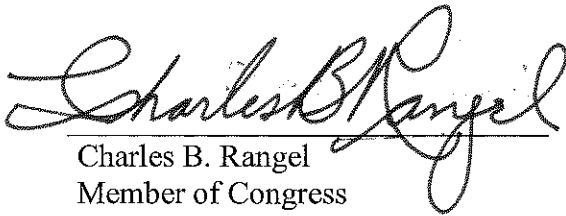
Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress



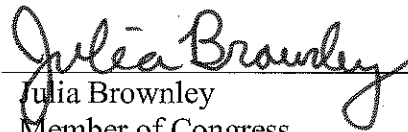
Paul Tonko  
Member of Congress



Gene Green  
Member of Congress



Charles B. Rangel  
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress

Cc: Susan Rice, National Security Advisor  
Cecilia Muñoz, Domestic Policy Council Advisor  
Tina Tchen, White House Council on Women and Girls